

COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF  
COMMUNICATION AS RELATED  
TO RAPE MYTHS

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Parents are important in the socialization process of their offspring, but the sexual socialization process is a complex process involving sexual knowledge and the development of sexual values and attitudes and is, therefore, difficult to determine (Hepburn, 1981; Luria & Rose, 1979). Sexuality in individuals begins at the moment of conception and the manner in which parents or parent substitutes act and react has a major effect on children's self concepts and adolescents' developing sexuality (Chilman, 1983).

Adolescents and young adults need to understand and deal with their own sexual capacities, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships to maximize potential development for participation in school, work, and society (Chilman, 1983; Juhasz, 1983). Healthy sexual development also could improve the future formation of stable, secure, heterosexual relationships for the development of sexuality as a basic part of human development (Chilman, 1983).

Data from several studies have indicated that home based sex education frequently does not occur (Fox, 1980; Gilbert & Bailis, 1980; Hepburn, 1981; Sorenson, 1974). When it does occur, the mother has been the common source of sex information (Fox, 1980; Onyehalu, 1983; Yalom, Estler & Brewster, 1982). Investigations have shown that sex learning, generally colored with misinformation, is obtained from peers, television, movies, and books and that



much of the information transmitted and communicated is inaccurate (Onyehalu, 1983).

Sexual attitudes are some of the kinds of misinformation transmitted (Burt, 1978). This includes rape myths which are connected to other pervasive attitudes, i.e., sex role stereotyping, distrust of the opposite sex, and acceptance of violence (Burt, 1980). Some of the rape myths that have been communicated are: (a) women get what they deserve, (b) rape is just sex, (c) men are out of control, (d) there is no such thing as rape, and (3) women seduce men (Burt, 1978).

Burt (1980) reports that changing these rape myths will not be accomplished easily because the myths are so closely interconnected with other strongly held and pervasive attitudes. Myths communicated about rape evolved from earlier concepts of ownership, hierarchy, and slavery (Brownmiller, 1975). The existence of rape in many cultures has been recorded in historical mythology, legend, art and drama. Bride captures, spoils of war, and punishment of the raped females occurred in England, ancient Babylon, and Israel, as did slavery rape in the United States (Brownmiller, 1975).

The complexity of the problem of rape, sex coercion, and violence appears embedded in attitudes and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation. Rape and violence and the myths surrounding them are pervasive and so closely interconnected that research data are needed to allow intervention for change (Burt, 1978).

## Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of rape myth acceptance of college males and females and their perceptions of openness of communication with their parents. This study utilizes a Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1978) to determine sex attitudes of college males and females and the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (Barnes & Olson, 1982) to determine the openness in communication with their parents. Therefore, this study was conducted in an effort to answer the following question: Is there a relationship between perceived communication with mother and father and rape myth acceptance of college sons and daughters?

## Significance of the Study

Research studies have not adequately examined the development of human sexuality from infancy through adolescence (Chilman, 1983). Paralleling the complexity of adolescent sexuality is the complex role of the family as transmitters of sexual information (Calderone & Johnson, 1981; Chilman, 1983; Scales, 1981). The role of the family as transmitters of sexual information remains obscure (Mancini & Mancini, 1985).

Research data indicates that mothers appear more involved in communicating sex information (Coreil & Parcel, 1985), but common sources of sex information for both males and females are received from same sex friends and through independent reading (Mancini & Mancini, 1985). Also, research data of adolescent sexuality have generally been concerned with specific topics

such as contraception, pregnancy, and permissiveness (Garris, Steckler & McIntire, 1976; Gilbert & Bailis, 1980; Hepburn, 1981; Kornfeld, 1985; Yalom et al., 1982), and most studies of parent-child communication have been self-reports (Barnes & Olson, 1982).

The current study focuses on perceived communication of adolescents and parents to augment the published data. Insufficient attention has been given to the involvement of parent-child communication regarding sexuality (Coreil & Parcel, 1985). The effect of parent-child communication is inconclusive. Parents have been recognized as the primary socializers of sex information and attitudes of their children (Calderone & Johnson, 1983), but additional studies of parent-adolescent communication are needed (Barnes & Olson, 1982).

Communication is important in interpersonal relationships and family development, adaptability, and satisfaction (Barnes & Olson, 1982). Though its importance is recognized, communication is difficult to study because of the many aspects of communication upon which researchers might focus (Barnes & Olson, 1982).

Thus, designing research to understand complex communication patterns, as well as reduce the nation's social problems appears formidable. Some of the social problems are the existing sex attitudes and stereotypes embedded in the United States culture (Burt, 1978). Also, studies indicate rape is a growing social problem (Burt, 1978; Malamuth, 1983; Sanday, 1981). Malamuth (1981) reported that 35 percent of the males in the general population indicated they would engage in some likelihood of rape if they knew they would not get caught. In addition, studies of sexual aggression among college students indicate that

violence is an increasing aspect of heterosexual relationships (Brodfelt, 1983; Koss & Oros, 1982; Makepeace, 1981; Matthews, 1983).

Therefore, this study has attempted to provide information regarding a specific aspect of parent-adolescent communication, the transmission of sex information. This research investigated the relationship between acceptance of rape myths of college students and their perceptions of openness of communication with their parents.

### Statement of the Hypotheses

Because the results from previous research studies regarding parent-child communication and sex information were inconsistent, the following null hypotheses, therefore, were tested at the .05 level of confidence.

General Hypothesis. 1. HO: Measures of the perceived degree of openness in communication with mothers and fathers are not significant predictors of rape myth acceptance as reported by male and female college students.

2. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mother among female college students.

3. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with father among female college students.

4. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mother among male college students.
5. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness in communication with father among male college students.
6. HO: There is no significant interaction between self-reported rape myth acceptance of beliefs and the interaction of the perceived openness in communication with mothers and fathers and the gender of the college students.

#### Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in this study.

Sexual assault includes many kinds of illegal sexual behaviors, such as incest, sodomy, carnal knowledge, fondling, and exhibitionism. Rape is only one form of sexual assault (Mazur, 1979).

Rape is the use of sexuality to express issues of power and rage, rather than being primarily an expression of sexual desire. Groth (1979) concluded in his study of the psychodynamics of rape that there are three basic components present in forcible rape: anger, power, and sexuality.

Rape myths are fables representative of a culture's sexual attitudes and beliefs surrounding rape. Some rape myths are: women ask for it, women who go to a man's apartment on a first date imply that they are willing to have sex, many rape victims are promiscuous, women unconsciously desire to be raped

(Burt, 1978). The 13 item Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1978) measures the acceptance of rape myths by the total score. The higher score indicates more acceptance of rape myths.

Communication refers to the exchange of information between parents and their adolescents. This information may be either factual or emotional in content. The Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (Barnes & Olson, 1982) was used to measure perceived communication patterns. This inventory focuses on two aspects of communication: (a) open family communication and (b) problems in family communication. Scores range from a low of 20 to a high of 100. The higher scores are indicative of more open communication.

### Limitations

The limitations of this study are:

1. In terms of population, generalization is limited. Subjects for this study were restricted to a community in one geographical location and were representative of only one junior college.
2. The inventories required the subjects to record their current perceptions of the way their mother and father interacted with them in the past and may not be accurate reflections.
3. The definitions of the variables, rape myths and parent-adolescent communication appear limited because both are subject to individual interpretations generally acquired earlier in childhood.
4. The use of self-report measures can be limiting. Critics of self-reports claim they are susceptible to response biases.

## Summary

Chapter I contains an Introduction, a Statement of the Problem, a Statement of the Hypothesis, Definitions of Terms, and Limitations of the Study. Chapter II presents a discussion of the theoretical framework of the research problem with supporting research literature. Chapter III contains a description of the Research Methodology and Research Analysis, the Selection of Subjects, the Instrumentation, the Procedures of Data Collection, Recording and Analysis, the Methodological Assumptions and Limitations, and a Restatement of the Conceptual Hypotheses. Chapter IV presents the results while Chapter V contains the Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of the literature relevant to the study of communication with parents, college males and females and rape myths. The socialization process of males and females in American society and its relationship with sexual attitudes and beliefs is examined initially. Patterns of communication between adolescents and their parents are examined by focusing on the definition of and beliefs of rape. The chapter concludes with a discussion of sexuality and sexual behaviors of college students.

#### Socialization Processes of Males and Females

Human development occurs as part of a larger process called socialization. Through this dynamics, complex process both hereditary and environmental factors are involved in the physical, mental and social development of the individual (Calderone, 1982; Franklin, 1984; Lewis, 1981; Napoli, Kilbride, & Tebbs, 1982).

The family is the primary socializing agent (Bardwick & Douvan, 1971; Calderone & Johnson, 1981; Franklin, 1984; Luria & Rose, 1979). Infants, regardless of race, ethnicity, or social class generally acquire information about themselves from the family during the first year of life (Calderone & Johnson,



1981; Franklin, 1984; Napoli, et al., 1982; ). Thus begins family communication regarding gender and cultural labels and expectations that have social meaning attached to the sex of the child and to self identity (Franklin, 1984).

According to Social Learning theory, children are differentially reinforced for sex-typed behavior by their family, but data is not consistent (Franklin, 1984).

Lewis and Weinraub (1979) advance these cognitive perspectives: (a) Babies learn about self as they acquire knowledge about others, (b) gender and sex role are acquired early, and (c) babies act in a consistent manner with "like objects" (p. 145). They assert that both social and cognitive learning play roles in sex-role acquisition. Franklin (1984) calls for more research studies of sex-role behavior because of inconsistency of the existing data.

As children grow, they observe male and female models and learn what task oriented and socioemotional activities are expected of them in specific situations and toward society as a whole (Franklin, 1984; Luria & Rose, 1979; O'Neil, 1981; Skovoholt, 1978). Societal expectations interact to influence gender role and sexual behaviors which are linked to culturally defined gender roles. Lewis (1981) found that, by the time infants had reached 18 months, they had developed some sense of self and others. Thus, children have begun the process of sex-role socialization which O'Neil (1981) defined as the process by which children and adults acquire and internalize the values, attitudes, and behaviors associated with femininity, masculinity, or both (Canter & Meyerowitz, 1984; Franklin, 1984; Gross, 1978; O'Neil, 1981).

Much of general society believes psychological sex roles are based on innate, genetic, and unchangeable biological differences (O'Neil, 1981). When

greater differences are attributed to males and females than actually exist, unfounded generalizations occur. These unfounded generalizations occur when biological differences or socialized sex differences are incorrectly attributed to unrelated skills of males and females (Gross, 1978; Lewis, Casto, Acquilino & McGuffin, 1978; Lofaro & Reeder, 1978). Because of these unwarranted generalizations, children are taught sex-typed communication styles and behavior patterns that traditionally represent their biological (Bardwick & Douvan, 1971; Bear, Berger & Wright, 1979; Franklin, 1984; Gross, 1978; Napoli, et al., 1982; O'Neil, 1981). These unwarranted generalizations are called stereotypes. Rigid stereotypes are not subject to change even when appropriate information is transmitted, thus, individual belief systems can become dysfunctional and lead to conflict and confusion (Napoli, et al., 1982; O'Neil, 1981).

O'Neil's (1981) summary of biological, psychological, and socialization studies indicate that males and females are not biologically alike because of differing amounts of body hormones. Attributed to differing levels are aggressive and dominant behaviors in males and decreased cognitive functioning in visual-spatial tasks in women. O'Neil (1981) indicates that the effects of family, friends, and environment are important factors in sex-role socialization, and perceived sex role differences exist more in stereotype than in biological fact.

Bardwick & Douvan (1971) refer to early childhood socialization as a process where girls are shaped into dependency and passivity. Female self-esteem and feeling of worth are external (Lewis, 1981; Pleck, 1982; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974; Rubin, 1983).

Early male behavior is less clearly defined than female behavior and young males must learn appropriate behavior by trial and error (Crites & Fitzgerald, 1978; Fasteau, 1974; Franklin, 1984; Gross, 1978; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974). Boys display higher activity levels, more physical impulsivity, and aggressiveness, and they become genitally sexual earlier than girls (Franklin, 1984; O'Neil, 1981). Hartley's (1959) classic study of boys analyzed masculine behaviors. Findings indicated that boys may be forced into early masculine behavior to avoid punishment by parents and peers. She indicated that boys experience sex role anxiety to the extent that they (a) have pressure to be manly; (b) are expected to conform to rigid sex role standards; (c) are provided a good role model; and (d) experience success in achieving the expected role.

Fasteau (1974) reports that as early as age four or five, boys not only learn what masculine activities are suitable, but also restrict themselves to those activities. They know they should not be like girls, but are uncertain as to what boys should be like. The male child begins to see himself as different and superior to the female, at least covertly. These attitudes are reinforced by American institutions (Bardwick & Douvan, 1971; Fasteau, 1974; Franklin, 1984; Lewis, et al., 1978; Lofaro & Reeder, 1978; O'Neil, 1981; Pleck, 1982; Skovholt, 1978). If males are socialized toward the masculine concept of sex as a conquest, they avoid the potential for intimacy because it can frighten them. This conquest orientation allows them to separate sex and feelings, unlike females (Bear, et al., 1979; Brown & Clary, 1981; Fasteau, 1974; Franklin, 1984; Lewis, 1981; Zilbergeld, 1978).

Studies of socialization are not intended to be inclusive as the constructs are many and varied, but for purposes of this study the focus is on the socialization processes of family communication and the transmission of sexual stereotypical beliefs. Current research continues to provide data to increase the information base regarding both hereditary and environmental factors in the socialization process (Franklin, 1984).

### Parent Adolescent Communication

#### Definition

Barnes and Olson (1982) have found communication to be very important in interpersonal relationships but difficult to define.

. . .research into the nature of family communication presents some challenging difficulties. One of the main difficulties is the complexity of family communication which presents a wide variety of aspects upon which researchers might focus. (p. 56)

In the development of the Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory, Barnes and Olson (1982) chose to measure both positive and negative aspects of communication, and to accomplish this, the final scale consists of two subscales which tap both content and process of the parent-adolescent interactions.

The first subscale, Open Family Communication, measures the more positive aspects of parent-adolescent communication. The focus is on the freedom or free flowing exchange of information, both factual and

emotional as well as on the sense of lack of constraint and degree of understanding and satisfaction experienced in their interactions. The second subscale, Problems in Family Communication, focuses on the negative aspects of communication, hesitancy to share, negative styles of interaction, and selectivity and caution in what is shared. (p. 59).

### Overview

Adolescence is a time of turbulence as youth search for an identity, strive for independence from family and develop interpersonal peer relationships (Chilman, 1983). As developmental changes occur, parents are faced with their own developmental needs as well as the developmental tasks of their adolescents (Juhasz, 1983). Communication patterns of families especially during adolescent years are vitally important to open negotiation within families, developmental growth, and socialization processes (Barnes & Olson, 1982).

Though communication is considered important within families and cultures, research data is limited because (a) family communication processes are complex and present many aspects on which to focus, (b) few studies are comparable, (c) most communication has been studied as a construct, and (d) studies have relied upon self-report data and primarily focused on communication of spouses (Barnes & Olson, 1982).

Existing studies have focused on different aspects of communication. Fox's (1980) literature review of the mother-adolescent daughter relationship as a transmitter for sexual socialization indicates that little published research is

available. Fox (1980) examined reasons for low levels of communication in the internal dynamics of the family as well as the interface between the family and other socialization agents. Findings indicate that much of the pattern of mother-daughter adolescent communication seemed unspoken, either directly or indirectly.

Fox and Inazu (1980) found that race, income, education, and family composition related to discussions about sex in their sample of 449 mothers and their 14-16 year old daughters. A total of 56 percent were black; one-fifth had incomes of less than \$9,000. A total of 43 percent were high school graduates and 33 percent had some college background. Findings indicated that daughters usually initiate conversations about dating, boys, and menstruation. Mothers initiate discussions about sexual morality, sexual intercourse and birth control. Results also indicate that mothers who were white, continuously married, and Catholic reported higher rates of non-verbal communication about birth control and sexual intercourse, which suggests that in a traditional conservative family these subjects are more likely to be discussed.

A study of mother/daughter communication and sexual generational differences was conducted by Yalom, et al. (1982). They surveyed 141 women who graduated from college in 1954 and who had college age daughters when the research was conducted. The college respondents were not matched and self-reports were used in gathering data. Chi-square analysis of the reports indicated that the daughters identified poor sexual communication more readily than the mothers. The general comfort level of communication was 46 percent for the daughters. Some of the sexual topics the mothers considered taboo for

discussion were masturbation and homosexual relationships. Generally, mothers and daughters expressed similar attitudes. Fox and Inazu (1980) implied that major communication changes have occurred in the well-to-do families and that mother-daughter sex topic communication has increased over the past 25 years.

Hepburn (1981) studied the role of the father in the sexual socialization of young women and found some communication transpired but that the mechanism of that transmission needed further study. Hepburn (1981) hypothesized that fathers may be consciously involved in teaching sexual attitudes and values to their daughters while assuming a minimal or nonexistent role in the transmission. The sample of 197 white families from upper and upper middle socio-economic levels was selected by drawing every fourth name of female students, grades 9 through 12 in one high school. A total of 12 families were interviewed at home. The parents were interviewed together, but the daughter was interviewed separately. The daughters assessed 60 percent correct the father's attitude toward premarital intercourse and 55 percent assessed same for the mother. Hepburn (1981) concluded that the mechanism of sex transmission is not direct, but fathers indirectly communicate and influence their daughters' sexuality.

Gilbert and Bailis (1980), in their study of sex education in the home, hypothesized that there was a lack of parental involvement because of the poor sex education of the parents themselves. A total of 59 parents were contacted by phone or in person to determine, by opinion survey, the types of sexually-oriented situations occurring in the home. Chi-square analysis revealed no

difference in number or type of sexual situation occurring as a function of the child's age. Gilbert and Bailis (1980) concluded that parents need adequate sex information if they are to be skillful sex educators of their children.

### Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors

Normal sex behavior (Juhasz, 1983) is that which is socially acceptable and culturally learned. Sexual behavior is statistically normal if it occurs within the normal range of frequencies defined by cultural mores.

Sex is a natural need like the need for air, food, sleep, and warmth, but unlike those body processes, it can be voluntarily controlled without threat to life (Calderone & Johnson, 1981; Juhasz, 1983; Zilbergeld, 1978). Sex drives and sexual feelings are not unhealthy, but the conflict between sex drives and feelings and society's attitudes and restrictions may cause problems (Juhasz, 1983). Different viewpoints within a culture allow for variations of behavior. For some members only procreative sex would be biologically appropriate while the moral view, based on Judeo-Christian principles, might be concerned with good, proper and moral (Brown & Clary, 1981; Juhasz, 1983). The moral viewpoint belongs to the majority of Americans, but other acceptable variations exist. Further complications are legal codes tied to morality and sex behavior and the normalcy concept. Those sexual variations which are likely to cause concern in American society are obscenity, pornography, exhibitionism, voyeurism, masturbation, homosexuality, and sexual abuse. Variations in sexual behavior become social problems when they interfere with society's standards of morality, legality or potential destruction of some established institution (Juhasz, 1983).



## Rape and Rape Myths

### Prevalence and Patterns

One of the variations in sexual behavior that has become a social problem is rape, a form of sexual abuse (Burt, 1978, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Sanday, 1981). The first empirical study of rape victims of all ages was in Denmark in 1962 (Mazur, 1979). Scientific measurement of the incidence of rape in the United States began in 1930, but little was written until the 1970's when the women's movement focused on rape victims as well as sexual assault victims of all ages (Mazur, 1979). Sherman (1985) states that 84,233 rapes were reported in the United States, up 6.7 percent from the 78,819 rapes reported the previous year, according to information acquired from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Sanday's (1981) study of 156 tribal societies indicates that the incidence of rape varies cross culturally. A total of 47 percent were classified as rape free societies. Sanday (1981) also found that where rape occurred in tribal societies, it was part of a cultural configuration that included interpersonal violence, male dominance, and sexual separation. In cultures that were considered rape prone, the women were often equated with fertility and the men with aggression and destruction. Rape was usually absent in tribes where men were in harmony with their environment, held nature sacred, were conditioned to respect female virtues and the sacredness of life (Sanday, 1981).

### Rape Definitions

Definitions of rape abound in keeping with a variety of state statutes. Amir's

(1975) definition of rape stresses the element of aggression; the sexual factor simply supplies the motive. Gager and Schurr (1976) called rape an atrocious crime that violated a person's innermost physical and psychological being that could leave scars to last a lifetime.

In his study of the psychodynamics of rape, Groth (1979) found that three components are always present in forcible rape; anger, power, and sexuality. Though they may vary, distinguishable patterns emerge. Anger rapists use anger and control to express hostility; power rapists are those who use sexuality as an expression of conquest; and the sadistic rapists use anger and control to express eroticism (Groth, 1979).

### Rape Myths

The complexity of rape increases when the diversity of stories and opinions regarding rape are considered. Many myths relative to rape circulate in American culture. Burt (1980) defined rape myths as fables representative of a culture's sexual attitudes and beliefs surrounding rape. Some examples of rape myths are: (a) there is no such thing as rape, (b) women ask for it, (c) women get what they deserve, (d) women who go to a man's apartment on a first date imply willingness to have sex, (e) any healthy woman can resist a rapist if she wishes, (f) many rape victims are promiscuous, (g) stuck up women deserve to be taught a lesson, and (h) women unconsciously desire to be raped (Burt, 1978).

During the 1970's, data was compiled and theories about rape were conceptualized by several feminists and criminologists, but rape supportive

attitudes received little research attention until the late 1970's (Burt, 1978; Field, 1978). Burt (1978) designed research to test assumptions which their theoretical analysis had produced. Four scales were created to measure attitudes believed theoretically relevant to rape myth acceptance; Sex Role Stereotyping, Sexual Conservatism, Adversarial Sexual Beliefs, and Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence. Item to item correlations were obtained on these four scales (Burt, 1978).

Burt's (1980) scale was administered to a random sample of 598 Minnesota adults, aged 18 years and older. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effects of the respondent's age, education and occupation on rape relevant attitudes. Results indicated fewer rape myth beliefs in younger, better educated people. Zero-Order correlation indicated that Interpersonal Violence produced the greatest effect. Burt's (1980) results also indicated that females who had experienced interpersonal violence seemed less sexually conservative. Media exposure produced less rape myth acceptance for men, but not for women.

### Perceptions of Rape

Burt and Albin's (1981) study of rape myths, rape definitions and probability of conviction of rapists considered the issue of consent. Data of 598 Minnesota residents was collected in 1977. Rape vignettes to assess variables on subjects perception of rape fault were analyzed by a 2 X 2 X 2 factorial ANOVA.

Regression analyses further assessed the simultaneous variable effects of victim's reputation, the relationship between the victim and assailant and the

probability of rape occurring. Other studies of the perceptions of the victims' contributory fault involved in rape have been conducted (Alexandar, 1980; Calhoun, Selby & Warring, 1976; Kanekar & Vax, 1983; Krulewitz & Payne, 1978; Pugh, 1983; Selby, Calhoun & Brock, 1977; Shotland & Goodstein, 1983). The findings from these studies indicate that males attribute more fault to the victim than do females, and the amount of force to determine rape and the sex-role attitudes of subjects were linked. Also, victims who have been raped previously were viewed more harshly by males than females.

Check & Malamuth's (1983) study determined to identify responses that characterize rapists. Burt's (1980) Sex Role Stereotyping Scale was used, followed by three stories of rape situations. A 3 X 2 X 2 MANOVA analyzed the sexual arousal and perception of the woman's reaction and an ANOVA was used to analyze the self-reported male subjects likelihood of raping. Results indicated that males showed higher arousal than females and high sex-role stereotyping subjects showed arousal patterns similar to those of identified rapists. Men with more stereotyped sex-role beliefs were more likely to indicate that they might commit rape. This study confirmed Burt's (1980) finding that rape myth acceptance forms a large interrelated attitude structure that includes acceptance of interpersonal violence, the belief that sexual relationships are adversarial in nature and the influence of sex role stereotyping on reactions to rape. Malamuth and Check conclude that this finding supports Weis and Borges (1975) supposition that society socializes males to be offenders and females to be victims.

Malamuth (1981), Malamuth & Check (1981), and Malamuth (1983) researched male and female relationships, violence and rape. Malamuth (1981) reported that 35 percent of the males who were not convicted rapists indicated some likelihood of rape if they knew they would not get caught. Malamuth & Check's (1981) study to examine the effects of violent sexual movies on 271 males and females used an experimental design with control films to determine that males were more accepting of interpersonal violence, rape myths, and adversarial sexual relations than were females. Malamuth (1983) researched factors that contribute to men's aggression against women. Experimental measures were used to assess men's aggression against a woman within a lab setting and results supported the theory that there are common factors linking varied acts of aggression against women. Two groups composed of 42 men participated. No significant differences were found between the two groups indicating that factors associated with real world aggression against women successfully predict men's laboratory aggression against females. These studies indicate that rape is a growing social problem (Burt, 1978, 1980; Malamuth, 1983; Sanday, 1981).

### Sexuality and the Contemporary College Student

According to Chilman (1983), adolescence is comprised of two stages: ages 11-12 through 15-16 years and ages 15-16 through 21. Development and expression of adolescent sexuality results from the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic and political factors as they affect the individual from birth.

A child's gender identity tends to be largely the result of direct and indirect socialization processes (Franklin, 1984). His review of the literature indicated that the direct role of biology in sex differences is undetermined. Research findings have not consistently determined whether biology influences sensory, attentional, and temperamental sex differences (Lewis & Weinraub, 1979). Nor is it known how early physiological sex differences directly influence later behavior in males and females. It is generally agreed that environment, biology and cognitive-influences interact in the gender development socialization process (Franklin, 1984).

Through childhood and during adolescence, children become increasing aware of behaviors that parents and other adults consider appropriate for a boy or a girl. Family units will directly and indirectly convey to children attitudes and beliefs that will affect their offspring's eventual patterns of sexual beliefs and behaviors (Calderone & Johnson, 1981; Franklin, 1984; Napoli et al., 1982).

In the United States, these beliefs are not static, but changing. Males and females perform many more roles today than they did a few years ago (Calderone & Johnson, 1981). Sex attitudes and behaviors became more <sup>x</sup> permissive during the 1960's and 1970's influenced by social, economic, and political factors (Calderone & Johnson, 1981; Chilman, 1983; Garris, Steckler & McIntire, 1976; Kornfeld, 1985; Sigelman, Sigelman & Goodlette, 1984). These attitudes and behaviors were affected by expanding sex roles, increased number of women joining men in the market place, the women's movement, the men's movement, increased awareness of gay and lesbian rights, increased divorce

rate, and increased reports of rape (Chilman, 1983; Franklin, 1984; Scultz & DeSavage, 1975).

Several authors (Kirkendall & Libby, 1985; Kornfeld, 1985; Sorenson, 1974) indicated direct parental sex education was not occurring in the home and hypothesized that the lack of parental involvement in sex education resulted from the poor sex education of parents themselves. These studies inferred a discrepancy between actual and desired levels of communication of family members. The changing societal attitude of the young seemed to have outpaced the sex education occurring in the home (Hildebrand & Abramowitz, 1984). The accessibility of contraceptives during the 1970's created new relaxed attitudes about sex among the young (Garris, et al., 1976; Kornfeld, 1985).

Garris, et al. (1976) and Kornfeld (1985) studied the relationships between oral contraceptives and sexual behavior and found a direct relationship between oral contraceptives and the frequency of sexual partners. The number of sex partners, however, did not increase. Heterosexual permissiveness and behavior in the Western world continued spiraling during the 1970's (Hildebrand & Abramowitz, 1984; Staples, 1978; Taylor, 1983).

Staples' (1978) study of 429 black and white college students at two colleges in Florida and one in California found that the stronger the amount of general liberality in a group, the greater the likelihood that social forces would maintain high levels of sexual permissiveness. Chi-square statistical analysis of the data indicated that the white low permissiveness group was more sensitive to the social forces than the black permissiveness group. Taylor (1983) studied 133 students enrolled in human sexuality courses at a Southeastern university and

223 students at a Northwestern university to determine attitude changes and regional differences. She employed multivariate analysis to determine which of the 18 items on the attitude scale contributed most to the overall experimental group differences between the pre-test and post-test. Class and group discussions were the most important factors. The most important changes were attitudes toward the sex drive, homosexuality, religious hangups, and adult sex behavior (Taylor, 1983).

Hildebrand and Abramowitz (1984) found that inhibitions decreased in the 1960's and 1970's and sexual tolerance increased. They studied college students enrolled in human sexuality courses offered in 1969, 1973, 1977, and 1981. Chi-square statistical analysis showed that the sexual inhibitions continued to relax on campuses up to the 1980's, but the rate had begun to decelerate in the latter half of the 1970's. Oral sexual activity among sexually active students increased from 77 percent in 1973 to 85 percent in 1977 and then to 88 percent in 1981. Sexual liberation proceeded more rapidly for college women than for men. By 1980 the coital rate was 61 percent for college women and 70 percent for college men.

### Sexual Aggression of College Students

Violence as an aspect of premarital heterosexual interaction among college students has been studied by several researchers (Brodfelt, 1983; Koss & Oros, 1982; Makepeace, 1981; Matthews, 1983; McKinney, 1986a, 1986b; Sigelman, Berry & Wiles, 1984). Makepeace's (1981) exploratory study sought (a) to develop and refine an instrument for measuring and studying courtship violence;



(b) to estimate the incidence of courtship violence in a sample of college students; and (c) to describe variations in the forms of courtship violence. A questionnaire was administered to 202 college students predominately from rural areas and small towns. Findings indicated that more than one subject in five had previously experienced personal violence. In half of the cases examined, violence had occurred on multiple occasions.

Koss and Oros (1982) developed a sexual experiences survey to reflect hidden cases of rape and document a dimensional view of sexual aggression/sexual victimization. The secondary goal was to develop an instrument capable of reflecting the large unreported incidences of rape and sexual aggression that may be occurring in the United States. Their sample of 3,862 students responded to the Sexual Experiences Survey. Koss and Oros (1982) found that the extent of sexual aggression/victimization that students reported suggested that the survey could be used as an alternative approach for accumulating additional rape research. Three years later, Sherman (1985) reported that Koss and Oros had conducted the most current comprehensive study of date rapes. Findings compiled following three years of researching students at universities nationwide indicated that, of the first 1,000 respondents, one out of eight women said she had been raped. Of that group, 47 percent said the rapists were first dates or romantic acquaintances.

Brodgelt's (1983) research of college students attending a East coast university showed that a significant degree of aggression pervades the college society with violence centering about threats, pushing, slapping, and punching on many dates. A total of 31 percent of all females had suffered one or more of

these forms of violence while dating in college. Alcohol and drugs were not found to be the dominant force in these violent episodes.

Matthews (1983) sought to replicate the previous work of Makepeace (1981). He used a 57-item questionnaire which was a modified version of Makepeace's original instrument. The questionnaire was administered to 351 University of Massachusetts participants in a classroom setting. Chi-square analysis to determine differences between males and females was employed and a frequency count of responses to each item dichotomized those who reported violence from those who did not. A total of 22.8 percent reported violence was compared to 21.5 percent in Makepeace's (1981) study. A total of 56 percent reported knowledge of dating violence in friends or acquaintances as compared to Makepeace's 61.5 percent. There were no significant differences between violent and nonviolent respondents in terms of age, race, religion, sexual preference, or family income. Makepeace (1981) indicated that females perceived themselves to be victims, while in Matthews' (1983) study, both males and females tended to perceive themselves as equally responsible for the violent episode. A total of 39 percent of the respondents continued in the relationship after the violence occurred.

Sigelman, et al. (1984) hypothesized that heterosexual violence was more likely in serious cohabitating relationships, lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and among abused children. A total of 504 college students were surveyed at an Eastern university near the Appalachian Mountains. Students completed a questionnaire consisting of six sections. The first section requested demographic information. The second was the short form of the Attitudes Toward Women

information. The second was the short form of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS). The third section was the Social Desirability Scale. The final three sections of the questionnaire dealt with abuse. One section was a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale. The last two sections dealt with those who reported abuse and the most recent date the abusive relationship had occurred.

Analyses of sex differences were conducted to determine which of several predictors were related to both gender. Eight predictors were found which were scrutinized by discriminant analysis to determine each predictor's involvement toward abuse. The overall prediction model fell short of significance for males, but the larger female sample revealed that females who reported abusing partners were likely to score low in social desirability, to have been abused as a child, and to come from a non-Appalachian area. The AWS proved to be a weak predictor of involvement, indicating abuse. Women were more likely to slap, kick, hit, or throw things at their partners. Men were more likely to commit aggression in the context of sexual behavior. This study linked involvement with abuse to having been abused as a child, and the researchers concluded that their findings hint that it matters less who is more liberated or who holds more power in a male-female relationship than that a discrepancy in sex role attitudes or a recognized power balance exists.

### Summary of the Literature

The review of the literature indicates that the socialization process of young American males and females is complex and constantly changing. The rapidity of change and the lagging socialization process has created an arena where the

old rules no longer apply and uncertainty exists as to what the new rules should be.

Parents' roles also have become more blurred as changing families in a constantly changing world try to maintain a sense of order. Parental beliefs and attitudes are not always flexible or based on current information. When this occurs within the family, the communication that transpires between parents and their offspring may be limited or stereotyped. Regardless of beliefs and attitudes, family communication patterns directly and indirectly influence children's sexual socialization.

Inadequate sex education and communication may be contributing to current sexual behaviors and attitudes of adolescent college students. Sex behaviors and attitudes vary from family to family, but some sexual behaviors are not acceptable or legal. Rape is one of those behaviors. Many rape myths exist and pervade the American culture, contributing to the complexity of rape and violence in the American society.

The impact of changing sexual standards impacted the young college students during the 1960's and 1970's. The more liberal sexual attitudes have paralleled date rape and violence on college campuses and aggressive behaviors seem to be indicators of current sexual behaviors and existing American social problems. These beliefs and attitudes do not appear to be susceptible to change unless a concerted effort is made toward providing adequate information throughout the developmental growth of American youth.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the subjects as well as the instrumentation and procedures utilized in this study. The research method and statistical design also are described.

#### Subjects

A total of 197 students (97 males, 100 females) enrolled in a junior college located in a small town in the southwestern United States served as subjects for this study. They were volunteer students from English and child care classes and came from homes representing lower middle and upper middle income families. Due to computerized processing of incomplete forms, the number of students' scores included in the various tables varies, but the number of subjects remained above the recommended number for a regression analysis of data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983).

The use of a college classroom setting for gathering data did not allow for true random sampling of subjects. There were advantages, however, in collecting data in the classroom. First, the classroom provided a natural setting, thereby eliminating sources of error in the sampling procedure. For example, if

individual subjects were selected to participate in the study from within a classroom, the possibility of a Hawthorne effect could have confounded the data. Second, the college classroom setting allowed for control of extraneous factors among subjects and, therefore, provided the opportunity for the testing of a greater number of subjects (Isaac & Michael, 1983).

### Characteristics of the Subjects

The 97 male and 100 female students ranged in age from 17 to 20 years. A summary of the descriptive data is presented in Table I. The largest percentage, across categories, were found to be 19 years of age, 68.5 percent were classified as freshmen, and 31.5 percent were classified as sophomores. The students were either natives of the United States (Blacks, Caucasians, Native Americans) or Asian. Regarding the type of setting where the college students were raised, 34 percent (67) were from a rural setting; 13.7 percent (27) were from a small town; 21 percent (42) represented a small to mid-size town of 1,000 to 10,000; 20 percent were from a mid-size town of 10,000 to 75,000 and 10 percent (21) were from a larger town setting of more than 75,000 population. Chi-square analysis of gender by setting where college students were raised was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) indicating that male students were from predominately rural and large towns while females were from small and mid-size towns (see Table 2).

The mean age of the mothers of the college students was 44 years with a median age of 42. The mean age of the fathers of the college students was 46 years with a median age of 44. The majority of the college students (68) lived

Table 1

Subject Characteristics by Frequency, Percent,  
Mean and Standard Deviation

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	197	100		
Male	97	49.2		
Female	100	50.8		
Age	197	100	18	.7
17	2	1.0		
18	65	33.0		
19	97	49.2		
20	33	16.8		
Race				
White	164	83.2		
Black	21	10.7		
Native American	10	5.1		
Asian	2	1.0		
Classification				
Freshman	135	68.5		
Sophomore	62	31.5		

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Setting				
Rural	67	34.0		
Small Town	27	13.7		
1,000-10,000	42	21.3		
10,000-75,000	40	20.3		
Over 75,000	21	10.7		
Age of Mother			44.13	.479
32	1	.5		
35	2	1.0		
36	4	2.0		
37	11	5.		
38	10	5.		
39	17	8.		
40	24	12.		
41	20	10		
43	12	6.1		
44	11	5.6		
45	12	6.1		
46	5	2.5		
47	8	4.1		
48	9	4.6		



Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
50	2	1.0		
51	1	.5		
52	2	1.0		
53	5	2.6		
54	6	3.1		
55	1	.5		
56	1	.5		
57	2	1.0		
58	2	1.0		
59	3	1.5		
60	3	1.5		
62	1	.5		
68	.5	.5		
78	1	.5		
Age of Father			46.44	7.0
31	1	.5		
37	1	.5		
38	4	2.2		
39	11	6.0		
40	11	5.6		
41	18	9.9		
42	22	11.2		

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
43	15	7.6		
44	12	6.1		
45	13	6.6		
46	7	3.8		
47	5	2.7		
48	5	2.7		
49	4	2.2		
50	10	5.5		
51	4	2.2		
52	3	1.6		
53	7	3.8		
54	4	2.2		
55	3	1.6		
56	4	2.2		
57	2	1.1		
58	3	1.6		
59	1	.5		
60	1	.5		
62	2	1.1		
63	2	1.1		
64	2	1.1		
65	3	1.6		

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
67	2	1.1		
Parents Lived With Before College				
Both Mother/Father	133	67.9		
Mother	23	11.7		
Mother/Stepfather	23	11.7		
Father	4	2.0		
Father/Stepmother	6	3.0		
Other	7	3.6		

Table 2

Chi-Square Analysis of Gender by Age,  
Race, Class Setting and  
Parental Structure

Category	$\chi^2$	Df	Significance
Age by Gender	1.574	3	.06665
Race by Gender	3.243	3	.356
Class by Gender	.0889	1 <sup>a</sup>	.7655
Setting Where Students Grew Up	12.131	4	.0164*
Parental Structure Where Students Were Raised	4.928	5	.4248

<sup>a</sup>Corrected by Yates Formula

\* $p < .05$

with both the mother and father before college while 12 (23) percent lived with their mother and 12 (23) percent lived with their mother and stepfather.

#### Instrumentation

Two instruments were utilized to gather data. They are the Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (Barnes & Olson, 1982) and the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1978).

### The Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory

The Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (Barnes & Olson, 1982) was developed to assess the views of both adolescents and their parents regarding their perceptions and experiences of communication. The authors were particularly interested in openness within the family, the extent to which information was exchanged between generations. The instrument consists of two subscales which tap both content and process issues. Barnes and Olson (1982) were interested in the factual and emotional information exchanged and developed the first subscale (Open Family Communication) to measure freedom or free flowing exchange of information. The second subscale (Problems in Family Communication) measures the negative aspects and styles of communication.

Items selected for this instrument were generated from Barnes and Olson's (1982) literature review. Items from other sources were reworded, ". . .to pertain to interaction between parents and adolescents" (p. 57). The early developmental work included unrestricted varimax rotated factor analysis which yielded three main factors. This data were factor analyzed collapsing the second and third scale into a single factor and keeping the first scale as a separate factor resulting in an alpha reliability of .88 for the Total Scale.

The authors selected 35 items from their initial pool and completed a pilot study involving 433 adolescent subjects from four institutions in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Using data from the pilot study, a 20-item scale was developed and 124 subjects from 12 high schools were involved in the test-retest reliability of the

Parent-Adolescent Communication scale administered after an interval of four to five weeks yielding an  $r = .60$ .

The inventory focuses on interaction between adolescents and their mothers and fathers. The adolescent responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=low to 5=high) range from a possible low score of 20 to a possible high score of 100 for the entire scale.

Reliability. Reliability for the communication inventory of the final scale is reported in the Families Inventory manual (Barnes & Olson, 1982) as measures of internal consistency. Two samples ( $N = 925$ ;  $N = 916$ ) were field tested, and the reliabilities are reported as .87 and .78 for Open Family Communication subscale and .77 for Problems in Family Communication subscale for both samples. The total scale indicates a reliability index of .88.

A Cronbach's alpha reliability statistical analysis was performed by this researcher ( $N = 173$ ). Reliability coefficients reflecting internal consistency for the 20-item Mother Communication scale were .85 and the Standardized Item Alpha = .86. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the 20-item Father Communication Scale were Alpha = .84 with a Standardized Item Alpha of .84 (see Table 3).

Table 3  
Means, Standard Deviations and Reliability  
Estimates of Responses on the Rape Myth  
Scales and the Parent-Adolescent  
Communication Inventory

Instrument		Instrument	
Rape Myth Scale		Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory	
N = 173		(Mother)	(Father)
		N = 173	N = 173
Mean	21.78	.232	.21
Standard Deviation	2.396	12.917	12.157
Alpha	.68*	.85*	.84*
r =	.68**ab		

\*Cronbach's Alpha

\*\*Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

<sup>a</sup>N = 26

<sup>b</sup>p = < .003

Validity. Construct validity for the 20 test items on the Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory was provided by the use of unrestricted varimax rotated factor analysis. Factor loadings for the Factor I (Open Family Communication) subscale range from .48 to .71. Factor II (Problems in Family

Communication) subscale factor loadings range from .26 to .60. A sum score is obtained but to distinguish items from the two subscales. Scores obtained from the problems in Family Communication need to be flipped in point value and then added to the responses on the first subscale for a sum total scale score. Higher scores indicate more open family communication while lower scores indicate problems in family communication.

### The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1978) was derived from theories that were conceptualized by feminists and criminologists during the 1970's and focused on female victims of rape. Burt (1978) designed her research to test earlier assumptions that feminists and criminologists had produced. Four scales were created to measure attitudes believed theoretically relevant to rape myth acceptance: sex role stereotyping, sexual conservatism, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence. Each of the four scales was constructed in the same way. Pretests using a 19-item pool were administered to select final items for the test.

Validity. Responses to all items measuring a single attitude were subjected to item analysis. The best items were then selected for the final scale. Cronbach's Alpha for each scale was sex role stereotyping .80; adversarial sexual beliefs .80; sexual conservatism .81; and acceptance of interpersonal violence .59. The item to item correlation of each item with the total ranged from .27 to .62. The final Rape Myth Acceptance Scale consists of 13 items. The Rape



Myths Acceptance Scale was administered to a random sample of 598 adults, aged 18 and older in the State of Minnesota. Internal consistency of this inventory, using Cronbach's alpha was reported as .87 representing an index of reproducibility or single trial reliability. Burt's (1978) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale has been used in several studies (Burt, 1980; Burt & Albin, 1981; Malamuth, 1981, 1983; Malamuth & Check, 1981).

Reliability. Reliability for the scale obtained of 173 college students in the form of Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was: Rape Myths  $r = .68$ ,  $p < .003$ , (see Table 3).

During this present study, further analysis of the responses on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1978) was completed by this researcher (N = 173). Reliability coefficients indicated alpha = .66 (see Table 3).

A test-retest analysis of the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1978) was obtained by this researcher. The 13-item scale was administered at a college located in a central region at one southwestern state (N = 23). The scale was administered to college students the second time following a two-week interval. Pearson's reliability coefficients = .85,  $p = .071$ .

### Procedure

Permission to use an adolescent college population was requested from the administration of a Southwestern U.S. junior college and instructors of the junior college were asked to have their classes participate prior to the testing dates. Permission to use the instrument was also obtained (see Appendix A).

Administration of the instruments was completed during a one week period. On the day of testing, the administrator entered the classroom and distributed the instruments to the subjects. The cover page requested demographic data while assuring the students of the confidentiality of their answers (see Appendix B). The separate inventories provided the directions needed for student responses. Completion of the demographic information and the inventories required approximately 30 minutes. As the subjects finished the tests, the administrator collected the completed instruments.

### Research Method

The research method used for this study was correlational. The predictor variables were college gender, perceived level of communication with mother and perceived level of communication with father. The criterion variable was belief in rape myth as measured by the frequency of the rape myth scores. A higher score indicated higher acceptance of rape myths.

### Statistical Analyses

The statistical procedures used for this study were multiple regression analyses using SPSSX (1983). This procedure enabled the researcher to determine if a statistically significant regression equation could be formed on the basis of a relationship between beliefs regarding rape myths from perceived degrees of openness in communication between parents and their adolescent offspring.

One of the limitations of regression analyses concerns the inferring of causal relationships from the data obtained. A regression technique that demonstrates prediction is in no way meant to infer causality.

To test the appropriateness of this statistical technique, several factors needed to be considered before the data were analyzed. These include examining the data for problems with outliers, multicollinearity, singularity, and skewness. If any of the factors were identified, adjustments were made according to the procedures directed by Tabachnik & Fidell (1983).

The assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were also investigated and were met for each variable. If a statistically significant relationship was found among the criterion and predictor variables, a stepwise procedure for this study was made in order to determine the unique contribution of each variable. An experiment wise error rate of  $p < .05$  was used to test each hypothesis. The strength of the relationship was analyzed using  $r^2$  (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1983). This statistic represents the proportion of variability in the predictor variable that is associated with the criterion variable.

### Hypotheses

Based on information from the literature, the following null hypotheses tested at the .05 level of confidence were:

General hypothesis: 1.  $H_0$ : Measures of the degree of perceived openness in communication with mothers and fathers are not significant predictors of rape myth acceptance as reported by male and female college students.

2. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mothers among female college students.
3. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with fathers among female college students.
4. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mothers among male college students.
5. HO: There is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness in communication with fathers among male college students.
6. HO: There is no significant interaction between self-reported rape myth acceptance of beliefs and the interaction of the perceived openness in communication with mothers and fathers and the gender of the college students.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

Presented in this chapter are the results of the statistical analyses for the six hypotheses formulated in this study. The major emphasis of this study was to determine if measures of the college students' perceptions of their communication with parents were significant predictors of the students' belief in rape myths.

The results of this study provide information regarding the joint and unique contributions of the independent variables in the prediction of belief in rape myths. The relationship between the criterion variable and the independent variables were obtained by performing a multiple regression analysis for the combined samples. Computations were done using the Multiple Regression SPSS-X Package (SPSS-X, user's guide, 1983).

Hypothesis one was investigated using multiple regression while hypothesis two through six were investigated using simple correlation. The correlation coefficients and beta weights were tested for significance using an F test.

## Test of Research Hypotheses

### Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one states that measures of the perceived degree of openness in communication with mothers and fathers are not significant predictors of rape myth acceptance as reported by male and female college students. A multiple regression analysis between belief in rape myths and the independent variables was performed to determine the predictive contributions of college gender and perceived communication with parents. A significant multiple correlation was not found.

Examination of the results of the stepwise multiple regression analyses is shown in Table 4. It was found that gender was significantly related to rape myth acceptance ( $F, 1, 172, .0125, p < .05$ ) while neither of the other variables were significantly related as shown in Table IV (communication with mother,  $F, 1, 172 = .977, p > .05$  and communication with father,  $F, 1, 172 = .103 p < .05$ ).

The strength of the relationship between the two variables, gender and rape myth acceptance as indicated by  $r^2$  is .04 suggesting that 4 percent of the variance in rape myth acceptance can be attributed to gender. An examination of the mean of the rape myth-acceptance scores indicate that females are less likely ( $M = 22.21$ ) than males ( $M = 21.31$ ) to accept myths about rape. See Table 5 for a complete description of means and standard deviations for the scale used to measure the independent and dependent variables.

Table 4  
 Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses and  
 F Tests for Rape Myths with the Independent  
 Variable for All Subjects

Multiple R	.20799	Analysis of Variance			
R Square	.04326		Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
Adjusted R Square	.02638	Regression	3	42.75327	14.25109
Standard Error	2.35835	Residual	170	945.50535	5.56180
	F = 2.5632			Sig. F = .0565	
<u>Variables in the Equation</u>					
Variable	B	SE B	F	Sig. F	
Gender	.823458	.076402	5.107	.0251*	
Father Communication	-.031206	.111156	.364	.5472	
Mother Communication	.023116	.112238	1.234	.2682	
(Constant)	19.798037	1.176919	282.977	.0000	

\*P = < .05

Table 5  
 Mean and Standard Deviation of  
 Scores by Gender

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<u>Rape Myth Scale</u>					
Subjects	Mean			Standard Deviation	
Males (84)	21.31			2.45	
Females (90)	22.21			2.26	

<u>Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale</u>					
Mother			Father		
Subjects	Mean	SD	Subjects	Mean	SD
Males (84)	68.43	12.60	Males (84)	67.68	11.64
Females (90)	72.01	12.99	Females (90)	86.03	12.64

---

### Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two states there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mother among female college students. The correlation between the criterion and the predictor variable was not found to be statistically significant ( $r = 0.07$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis two is not rejected (see Table 6).



Table 6  
 Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Between  
 The Independent Variables by Gender

---

Gender: Female

		(N = 99)	(N = 90)
	Rape Myth	Mother Comm.	Father Comm.
Rape Myth	1.000	-.0696	-.1579
Mother Communication		1.000	.6961*
Father Communication		1.000	

---

Gender: Male

		(N = 95)	(N = 86)
	Rape Myth	Mother Comm.	Father Comm.
Rape Myth	1.000	.1715	.2202
Mother Communication		1.000	.7885*
Father Communication			1.000

---

\*Probability = .000

### Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three states that there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with fathers among female college students. The correlation

coefficient is not significant ( $r = -.16$ ) at the .05 level. The statistical analysis performed on the data does not allow hypothesis three to be rejected (see Table 6).

#### Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four states that there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mothers among male college students. The correlation between the criterion and predictive variables ( $r = .172$ ) as shown in Table 6 is not significant at the .05 level. Hypothesis four is not rejected.

#### Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five states that there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with fathers among male college students. The correlation coefficient is  $r = .22$  and is statistically significant at the .05 level. Therefore, hypothesis five is rejected (see Table 6).

#### Hypothesis Six

Hypothesis six states that there is no significant interaction between self-reported acceptance of rape myth beliefs and the interaction of the perceived openness in communication with mothers and fathers and the gender of the college student. Multiple regression analysis between belief in rape myths and the independent variables was performed to determine the predictive

contributions of college gender and perceived communication with parents. Even though the F value approached significance [ $F(3, 170) = 2.56$ ,  $p < .056$ ], a significant multiple correlation was not found when all the variables were entered into the equation at once. Therefore, hypothesis six is not rejected (see Table 4).

Table 7

## Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis

## Reflecting Variables in the Equation

## For All Subjects

<u>Stepwise for Gender</u>								
Multiple R	.18904	Analysis of Variance		Sum of Squares	Mean Square			
R Square	.03574	Df		35.31735	35.31735			
Adjusted R Square	.03013	Regression 1		925.94127	5.54036			
Standard Error	2.35380	Residual 17		F = 6.37456		Sig. F = .0125*		
<u>Variables in the Equation</u>								
(A)	B	SE B	Beta	SE Beta	Correl.	Partial Cor.	F	Sig. F
Variable								
Gender	.901587	.357094	.189042	.074874	.189042	.189042	6.375	.0125*
(Constant)	20.407937	.570426					1279.969	.0000

N = 173

P = &lt; .05

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a general view of the study and an analysis of the findings. General conclusions based upon the results of the research are discussed. Recommendations for future research are considered.

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate if self-reported rape myth acceptance could be predicted utilizing a measure of perceived parent-adolescent communication of college males and females. The 197 subjects in this study were selected from a population of freshman and sophomore college students enrolled in a junior college located in a small town in the southwestern United States. There was a total of 197 subjects, 97 males and 100 females. The number of subjects utilized in the analysis varies due to computerized processing of incomplete forms of some subjects.

Test data consist of the students' rape myth acceptance scores as measured by the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1978) and subjects' perceived parent adolescent scores as measured by the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (Barnes & Olson, 1982). Additional demographic data were obtained from the students' response to an information sheet designed

specifically for the purposes of this study. Frequency of responses by gender of the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale are included (See Appendix E). Six hypotheses were tested using multiple and simple regression analyses correlations of the data.

The first hypothesis states that measures of the degree of perceived openness in communication with mothers and fathers are not significant predictors of rape myth acceptance as reported by male and female college students. A multiple regression analysis between rape myth acceptance scores and the two independent variables was performed to test hypothesis one. A significant multiple correlation was not found. Examination of the results of the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analyses indicated that of the three independent variables Communication with Mother, Communication with Father, and Gender, only Gender was statistically significantly related to rape myth acceptance scores.

Hypothesis two states that there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mothers among female adolescent college students. The correlation coefficient was not significant and, therefore, hypothesis two was not rejected. Though not significant, examination of Pearson's  $r$  revealed that a simple correlation between the way female adolescent college students perceived communication with mothers was positively correlated with the way they perceived communication with fathers.

Hypothesis three states that there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with fathers among female college students. The correlation was

not significant. Based on the results of the statistical analysis performed on the data, hypothesis three was not rejected.

Hypothesis four states that there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness of communication with mothers among male college students. The correlation between the criterion and predictive variable was not statistically significant. Hypothesis four was not rejected.

Hypothesis five states that there is no significant relationship between self-reported beliefs about rape myth acceptance and perceived openness in communication with fathers among male college students. The correlation between the criterion and predictive variable was statistically significant. Based on the results of the statistical analysis performed on the data, hypothesis five was rejected.

Hypothesis six states that there is no significant interaction between self-reported acceptance of rape myth beliefs and the interaction of the perceived openness in communication with mothers and fathers and the gender of the adolescent college student. The correlation between the criterion and predictive variables was not significant at the .05 level. Therefore, hypothesis six was not rejected.

## Conclusions

This study has attempted to provide information regarding a specific aspect of parent-adolescent communication, the transmission of sexual attitudes regarding rape myths. The following question was examined: Is there a

relationship between perceived communication with mother and father and the self-reported rape myth acceptance of college sons and daughters? The results of the research indicated that college gender was significantly related to rape myth scores. The way female college students perceived communication with mother was positively correlated with the way they perceived communication with father. No differences were indicated for the other variables.

Previous research findings have been sparse, diverse and inconclusive, but the mother has generally been credited as the main source of sex education in the family, especially for the female offspring (Fox, 1980; Onyehalu, 1983; Yalom, et al., 1982; Coreil & Parcel, 1985). Results of this study indicate that the daughter's communication is positively correlated with mother and father which may suggest that the father's contribution is more important than some previous studies have indicated, but additional studies are needed to determine the communication patterns of the mother and father. The positive correlation of gender with mother and father raises more questions than it answers. How does the family communicate by providing roles and patterns for male/female relationships through nonverbal and verbal communication? Has the sexual revolution of the 1960's and 1970's drastically changed the role of the father as a transmitter of sex information? If so, has it increased? Does the family provide more indirect sex information than in previous years through books, magazines and pamphlets because of the increased availability of information sources?

A possibility for explaining the results of this study may be found in the research of Coreil & Parcel (1985) who cited mothers and fathers with greater involvement in influencing the sexual behaviors of daughters than of sons. Could

this explain the positive correlation in the present study? Does sex-role stereotyping continue to be transmitted generation after generation? Fathers' contribution to male offspring attitudes was positively correlated and needs investigation. That, combined with the results indicating that males have a higher acceptance of rape myth beliefs than females may suggest that sex role stereotyping and rape myth beliefs continue to be transmitted generationally despite research efforts and could suggest that fathers need to be more involved in accurate sex education. Also, it may suggest that parents have not received or transmitted accurate sex information to offspring, and it may indicate the need for increased sex education of both generations. Many factors are involved in communication of accurate sex information and more research is needed.

### Recommendations

There is a need for research data in the area of sexuality and family transmitted communication. Research is sparse, topical, inconclusive and contradictory. Some areas that could be investigated are:

1. Research data are needed regarding the role of the father and subsequent sexual socialization of young males and females. Little information is available in this area.
2. Research data are needed regarding the role of the mother and the transmission of sexual attitudes and beliefs. Though more information exists about the mother and sexual socialization than about the father, the information generally regards specific topics and is inconclusive.



3. Most studies have used college age subjects and the use of high school, junior high and elementary students could provide needed research data regarding sexuality, family communication and sexual aggression.

4. Another area of concern is the lack of instruments needed to adequately investigate the communication patterns of interpersonal relationships and various aspects of sexuality, sex aggression and violence.

5. Another area that needs investigating is the peer to peer influence in transmitting sex information. Improved instruments are also needed to investigate this area.

6. An area for research that could prove beneficial is the myriad influence of the media on developing adolescents as they acquire sexual attitudes and behaviors.

7. Longitudinal research is needed to assess the area of sexuality and family transmitted communication.

8. Because many social influences affect the sexual knowledge of offspring, it could prove beneficial to combine the efforts of family, school, community agencies and the media in the development of adequate sex education programs to educate males and females, hopefully reducing inaccurate sex information, stereotyping, and violence in American society.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A  
PERMISSION FOR INSTRUMENT USE

January 20, 1986

Ms. Martha R. Burt  
The Urban Institute  
2100 M. Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Ms. Burt,

I am a counseling doctoral student at Oklahoma State University and am rapidly approaching final deadlines regarding the research focus of my dissertation. I am focusing on the interaction of college gender, parent-adolescent communication, sexual (liberal and conservative) attitudes and rape myths. May I use your rape myths test for my dissertation research? My sample will be drawn from a junior college in northeastern Oklahoma where traditionalism lives on. It has been difficult for me to focus on one aspect because so much study is needed but I have found your work most helpful.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Patricia Heck*

Patricia Heck  
Brumley Apts. D4-10  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, OK 74074

*you don't need my permis*



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## PERMISSION TO USE FAMILY INVENTORIES

I am pleased to give you permission to use the instruments included in Family Inventories. You have my permission to duplicate these materials for your clinical work, teaching, or research project. You can either duplicate the materials directly from the manual or have them retyped for use in a new format. If they are retyped, acknowledgements should be given regarding the name of the instrument, developers' names, and the University of Minnesota.

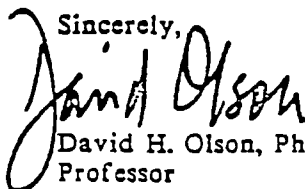
If you are planning to use FILE, A-FILE, and F-COPES, you need to obtain separate permission from Dr. Hamilton McCubbin. His address is 1300 Linden Drive, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.

Separate permission is also required to use the ENRICH inventory in either clinical work or research. This is because the inventory is computer scored and is distributed through the PREPARE/ENRICH office. For your clinical work, we would recommend that you consider using the entire computer-scored Inventory. We are willing, however, to give you permission to use the sub-scales in your research. We will also provide you with the ENRICH norms for your research project.

In exchange for providing this permission, we would appreciate a copy of any papers, thesis, or reports that you complete using these inventories. This will help us in staying abreast of the most recent development and research with these scales. Thank you for your cooperation.

In closing, I hope you find the Family Inventories of value in your work with couples and families. I would appreciate feedback regarding how these instruments are used and how well they are working for you.

Sincerely,

  
David H. Olson, Ph.D.  
Professor

DHO:vmw

APPENDIX B  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Thank you for participating in a research project concerning parent-adolescent communication patterns and sexual attitudes. The information gathered will be used strictly as research data in an attempt to better understand this interaction. It is very important that you complete all of the questionnaires once you have begun. Completion should require approximately 30 minutes.

There will be no identifying information requested—all information will be completely anonymous to both the researcher and the college faculty and staff.

Thank you,  
Patricia Heck, Researcher

#### PERSONAL DATA

1. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your race or ethnic background:
 

_____ White	_____ Native American
_____ Black	_____ Asian
_____ Hispanic	_____ (Other) _____
4. College Classification: Freshman \_\_\_\_\_  
Sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which of the following describes where you grew up?  
Check one:
 

_____ Rural setting (farm, ranch, etc.)
_____ Small-town up to 1000 population
_____ Population 1000 to 10,000
_____ Population 10,000 to 75,000
_____ Population over 75,000
6. Mother's current age \_\_\_\_\_ Father's current age \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please check ( ) the one box below that best described your home situation before entering college.
 

I live with both mother and father _____
I live with mother _____
I live with mother and stepfather _____
I live with father _____
I live with father and stepmother _____
I live with grandparents _____
Other _____

APPENDIX C

PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION SCALE





15. \_\_\_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_\_\_ There are topics I avoid discussing with  
my mother/father.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ 16. \_\_\_\_\_ I find it easy to discuss problems with  
my mother/father.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ 17. \_\_\_\_\_ It is very easy to discuss problems with  
my mother/father.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ 18. \_\_\_\_\_ My mother/father nags/bothers me.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ 19. \_\_\_\_\_ My mother/father insults me when s/he  
is angry with me.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ 20. \_\_\_\_\_ I don't think I can tell my mother/father  
how I really feel about things.

APPENDIX D  
RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE SCALE

## Questionnaire

Martha Burt has compiled a number of statements concerning rape. Read each of them and indicate whether you believe it to be true or false by circling the T (true or mostly true) or the F (false or mostly false).

1. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex. T F
2. Any female can get raped. T F
3. One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves. T F
4. Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she wants to. T F
5. When women go braless or wearing short skirts and tight shorts and tops, they are just asking for trouble. T F
6. In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation. T F
7. If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her. T F
8. Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve. T F
9. A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street, deserves to be taught a lesson. T F
10. Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked. T F
11. If a woman gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered "fair game" to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she want to or not. T F
12. Many women who report a rape are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man they accuse. T F
13. Many, if not most, rapes are merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their reputation T F

APPENDIX E  
RESPONSES BY GENDER OF THE RAPE  
MYTH ACCEPTANCE SCALE

## Responses by Gender of Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

	Female		Male	
	(Frequency)		(Frequency)	
	True	False	True	False
1.	14	86	28	69
2.	95	5	87	10
3.	62	38	72	25
4.	11	89	27	70
5.	53	47	47	50
6.	8	92	19	78
7.	32	68	30	67
8.	15	85	15	82
9.	2	98	5	92
10.	21	79	38	59
11.	13	87	15	82
12.	27	73	44	53
13.	17	83	35	62

VITA

Patricia Williams Heck

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATION AS  
RELATED TO RAPE MYTHS

Major Field: Counseling and Student Personnel

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Glade, Arkansas, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lysenby Williams. Marriage to Mr. Jess Heck and the birth of a daughter, Tara, and a teaching career followed.

Education: Graduated from Rogers High School, Rogers, Arkansas; attended Arkansas Tech, Russellville, Arkansas; received Bachelor of Science in Home Economics Education and Master of Science in Home Economics (1967) from the University of Arkansas; received Education Specialist in Counseling (1985) from Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas; completed requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in December, 1986.

Professional Experience: Teacher at Afton, Oklahoma, Public Schools and teacher and counselor at Miami, Oklahoma, Public Schools. Completed a practicum and internship at Payne County Youth Services, Stillwater, Oklahoma, and completed a semester of internship at Willow Crest Hospital, Adolescent Unit, Miami, Oklahoma.

Professional Organizations: American Psychological Association; American Association of Counseling and Development; National Education Association; Oklahoma Education Association; American Vocational Association; Oklahoma Vocational Association; Delta Kappa Gamma.